DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 077 096 EA 004 984

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TITLE How Can a School District Launch a Meaningful Training Program for Its Administrative Staff?
PUB DATE 26 Feb 73
NOTE 5p.; Paper presented at American Association of School Administrators Annual Convention (105th, Atlantic City, New Jersey, February 24-28, 1973)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Administrative Personnel; Administrator Characteristics; *Administrator Education; Administrator Evaluation; Administrator Qualifications; *Administrator Role; *Board of Education Policy; Educational Programs; *Inservice Education; Leadership Training; Management Education; Speeches

ABSTRACT

Contemporary social changes demand a new role for the educational administrator. Yet, responses to a recent poll of 50 large cities indicate that most school districts still depend on the traditional training by universities for administration. Of the 34 cities that replied, only one school district indicated signs of an ongoing program for administrative trainees. The development of an inservice training program for administrators should begin with the assumption that it is essential to direct administrators into new channels of endeavor through training and retraining of personnel. Retraining should be mandatory for all administrators in the field, and training for potential candidates in administration should be provided on a selective basis. Any program should include such issues as management by objectives, attitudes of teachers and administrators, paraprofessional training, developing performance objectives, school-community planning, and the use of technology. (Author)

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
105th Annual Convention
Atlantic City, N. J. February 24-28, 1973

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TOPIC: HOW CAN A SCHOOL DISTRICT LAUNCH A MEANINGFUL TRAINING PROGRAM FOR ITS ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF?

PLACE: Madrid Room, Howard Johnson's

TIME: Monday, February 26, 1973, 2:30 P.M.

PROGRAM: Page 54 FOR RELEASE UPON DELIVERY

I know of very few models for in-service training or re-training of administrators. However, after a review of the literature and practices in the field, and looking back at my own experience as an administrator, I am convinced that today the job must be done more than ever before. I am also convinced that no single model or case study is transferrable from one district to another. Each has to be developed by the school district in accordance with its own needs and educational environment.

In the Spring, 1972, issue of Educational Administration Quarterly, Roald F. Campbell reviewed educational administration during the past twenty-five years, and concluded that "We have moved from a setting of social stability to one of social turmoil, from a public school monopoly to a search for alternatives..." And he adds, "Perhaps never since the Civil War have we been so unsure of ourselves, our institutions and of our directions." Among the important tasks that Campbell sees ahead are: the clarification of goals and values, relationships with minority and majority groups, coping with conflicts, and generating information for planning and evaluation.

We recognize that our school clientele has changed. Teachers and communities have changed. Today, the selection of a textbook, the expulsion of a student, the dismissal of a teacher, or even the relevancy of an exam -- may be challenged in the courts. These changes may not be all bad - but they certainly don't contribute to the life expectancy of a superintendent, and they definitely underscore the urgency of in-service training and retraining.

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The honeymoon that has existed between the American public and the schools is over. The parent who believed that the school can do no wrong has disappeared along with the teacher who had accepted the administrator's word as law. We're living in an age where we are surrounded by needs and demands for instant solutions and challenged by instant experts. The name of the game today is accountability, and everyone is evaluating administrators with too few being concerned for their preparation or re-training.

Gone are the days of Elwood Cubberley, whose textbook served as

gospel for some of our administrative training many years ago. Do you recall when Cubberley wrote about the superintendent, thus:

> His is the office up to which and down from which authority, direction, and information flow. He is the organizer and director of the work of the schools in all their various phases. He is the executive officer of the School Board and also its eyes and ears and brain. He's the supervisor of instruction in the schools, and also the leader, advisor, inspirer, and friend of the teacher.
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> He must not lose confidence in himself, for out of confidence in himself comes all of his other powers... The world always steps aside to let a man pass who knows where he's going. He must not repose too much confidence in other people. To trust subordinates and friends wisely, but not too much, is something he must learn.
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> --Cubberley, 1916

Recently, Cunningham and Nystrand, of Ohio State, wrote: "The era when sufficient qualifications for success as a school administrator were sound judgement, a pleasant personality, and some knowledge of finance and construction, and curriculum, is rapidly passing." They stressed the need to understand the changing goals of our educational system, the importance of anticipating needs and aspirations of our clients, etc. The issue of anticipation or forecasting has developed in recent years a school of writers and thinkers on the future. A review of this discipline clearly indicated the implications for planning and educational leadership.

Among scholars in the field of the behavioral sciences, we find the field of educational administration has shifted its emphasis and new directions have emerged in the past decade: less emphasis is placed on raw observation and more attention is given to relationships of basic disciplines. Haller, who has examined doctoral dissertations in school administration between 1957 and 1967, characterizes the change that has taken place during the decade with two hypothetical titles. Prior to 1960, the thesis would have been on "The Role of the Elementary School Principal in Selected School Districts in the State of Nebraska," and currently, the title would be "The Effect of School Desegregation on the Pupil's Self-Concept."

These kinds of changes must be considered in planning a program for the training of administrators. Let me cite two recent examples: one, in a large Midwestern city, there arose a dispute over the selection of a school principal. The school superintendent appointed a committee, consisting of staff members, board members, and citizens, to determine some necessary attributes for the selection of the school administrator. They listed the following concern for children, recognition of the ambitions of parents for their children, respect for the dignity of each individual in the school and in the community, willingness and ability to identify with the school community, and acceptance of the concept of working together with shared rights and responsibilities with community, parents, students <u>and staff</u> in determining the program of the school.

The committee then went on to recommend to the Superintendent "...to develop concise plans for compulsory management training courses for all administrative personnel."

In another very large city on the western coast, a summer workshop "On the Changing Role of the School Administrator" included the following major topics:

(1) Accountability and Responsibility in Public Education
(2) Goals and Objectives for Public Education
(3) Evaluation
(4) Conflict and Resolution in Public School Administration
(5) The Impact of Societal Problems
(6) Problems of Communication
(7) Organization of the Learning Environment
(8) Workable Staff Patterns
(9) Administration-Staff-Community Relationships

Despite all of these warnings and trends, a recent questionnaire sent to fifty large cities indicated that most school districts still depend on the traditional training by universities for administration. Of the thirty-four cities that replied, only one school district indicated signs of an ongoing program for administrative trainees.

Since most of our administrators come from the teaching ranks, and although I believe that this is an important experience for school administrators, I think that we must recognize that teaching as it is traditionally established has some drawbacks for effective administrative preparation. An adult spending ten to fifteen years in one room with twenty to thirty-five children - without another adult present for communication or involvement - does not develop many skills for future adult relationships. We must find some way to restructure teaching assignments to provide other experiences for teachers - and this should be done whether they become administrators or wish to remain teachers. It's necessary for them and for the children. I sometimes tend to agree with Paul Goodman, who stated that it is desirable to have schools near children's homes, so that 'on occasion they could escape from school to home or from home to school.'

There has been a considerable amount of discussion in recent years whether we prepare administrators or educational leaders, the distinction being that administration tends to prepare individuals for the preservation of the establishment or status quo, and that educational leadership suggests a program that will develop educators who are sensitive, flexible, and committed to change and innovation.

I do not wish to belabor this point, but it seems clear to me that authoritarianism, rigidity, and insensitivity are the very characteristics that will make life intolerable for a superintendent, and diminish the effectiveness of educational progress. A principal can be an educational leader within the broad guidelines established by the board and superintendent and still exercise flexibility and innovation. I'm worried about the crackpots at either end of the spectrum.

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Another issue that must be recognized is the distinction between participation by community, teachers, and students and that of accountability of the administrator. If the principal or administrator is to be held accountable, he must have some leadership role and some veto power. The administrator who can combine involvement and participation by parents, teachers and high school students, and still retain the leadership role, is the artist in administration that we must seek. For some, it comes naturally; for others, I think there is sufficient scientific knowledge available that training could be of help. Although I am more comfortable with organizations where participatory democracy exists, I do however want to add quickly that in the school, there never should be any doubt as to who is in charge and accountable.

Before I proceed to make some suggestions for a training program, I do want to add that the profession, in conjunction with the board of education and citizens, must give serious thought to the whole issue of accountability. It has been used rather loosely and has been neglected by the profession in the past. We must define what is meant by accountibility, and at the same time recognize its limitations. The issue is oversimplified. Some take the position that if the youngster fails, it's the fault of the teacher and administrator. There are others who assume if he fails, it's becausehis parents neglect him or he's poor. And then there are others who assume that if he succeeds, it's due to heredity. In the planning of a program for in-service training for administration, the entire issue of accountability must be carefully delineated today.

How, then, could a school system, large or small, go about the task of developing an in-service training program for administrators?

1. I believe that we must begin with the assumption that both training and re-training of personnel which directs administrators into new channels of endeavor, are essential. I believe that re-training should be mandatory for all administrators in the field, and training for potential candidates in administration on a selective basis.

2. Prior to initiating a training program, a school district should have an administrative handbook that clearly states the district's philosophy, regulations and procedures expected of school personnel.

3. Job descriptions for each administrative position should be developed, describing the prerequisites, the duties and responsibilities. I tend to prefer job descriptions that offer alternative useful experiences to be permitted as alternatives for some of the prerequisites usually listed for the position.

4. The planning process for training administrators should involve a broader base than the personnel. A superintendent could set up a committee consisting of central staff administration, teachers, principals, citizens, high school students, who would share in developing the expectations that the clients of the school district have of its future educational leaders. University resources should be involved.

5. After objectives of the training program have been developed - a separate staff, in cooperation with the appropriate resource people, should then develop the program itself.

There are many examples for staff training that have appeared in the last few years that I could suggest. Let me list only a few.

(1) The December, 1972 issue, THEORY INTO PRACTICE, entitled "Models of Staff Development," is one valuable source.

(2) A series of publications issued by the University Council for Educational Administration entitled, "Case Series in Educational Administration." That same body has also published a number of pamphlets recently that would prove very helpful if you have not seen them. Among these are Emergent Practice in the Continuing Education of School Administrators by Lutz and Ferrante, a very good review, primarily of what the universities are thinking and doing in this area. And another, Preparing of Educational Leader: A Review of Recent Literature, by Farquha and Piele. A third series is the one on pre-service and continuing education, issued by the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Let me add parenthetically, that any training program that is developed must reflect the reality of school administration in a given district. Lofty rhetoric unrelated to the realities of the job is both useless and demoralizing.

What are some of the issues that the program could include? I mentioned earlier that each district needs to develop its own program. But certainly included in any program should be such issues as management by objectives, attitudes of teachers and administrators, paraprofessional training, developing performance objectives, school-community planning, use of technology, etc. Each school district can develop its own techniques for implementing the program.

I tend to lean toward internship experiences - programs for potential administrators with opportunities to observe, to apply and to participate. In other words, real learning situations for future administrators. I think it's essential to provide, in any internship program, an educational component which offers an opportunity for peer sessions among the interns, for analysis and support. I need not list techniques such as simulation, case studies, games, etc., that have been used with different measures of success.

When can this be done? Again each school district must decide for itself. But it does require concentrated time and attention, whether it be in the summer, evenings, after school or Saturdays. It cannot be done in a two or three-day conference period.

I recognize that school districts throughout the country are undergoing today tremendous financial difficulties. Yet I believe that budget allocations for the development of training and re-training of school administrators as well as of the total staff is the number one priority for American schools today.

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